THE VOICE NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER – PASTOR PETER PEER

Ah December, that wonderful time of year when we celebrate the coming of our blessed Savior into the world to provide eternal salvation for all those who will put their trust in Him! The world celebrates Christmas without ever understanding what it is really about. Yet, for the millions who do not know Christ, it is even still a very special holiday celebrated throughout the world. It is an amazing fact that the birth of one person born over 2,000 years ago should evoke such celebration year after year through centuries. They may speak of the joy of Christmas, the spirit of Christmas, the giving of Christmas, yet they know nothing of the One whose birth Christmas commemorates. There has never been another person whose birth has been so universally celebrated. For those of us who know Christ as our Savior and Lord, Christmas holds a special meaning though it is full of mystery. The wonderful mystery of the incarnation is beyond the ability of any man to comprehend. The apostle Paul reduces the incarnation to this "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifest in the flesh,
justified in the Spirit,
seen of angels,
preached unto the Gentiles,
believed on in the world,
received up into glory." 1 Timothy 3:16.

Several years ago at the Ohio College of Pastors' Christmas banquet, I gave an address called "Of Originals and Copies." In that talk I contemplated the wonder of the incarnation. God, the original, made a copy of Himself when He created man "in His own image and likeness." But when the copy became corrupted with sin, the original Himself became a copy that He, as a copy, might die in order to restore the copies to the original image and likeness in which they were created. Who can understand it? The immortal, eternal God clothed Himself in the garb of the human flesh of which he was the creator. The apostle Paul puts it more eloquently than I, "8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:8-11. Augustine said, "He was created of a mother whom He created. He was carried by hands that He formed. He cried in the manger in wordless infancy. He, the Word, without whom all human eloquence is mute." A quote from the Preacher's Homiletical Commentary on Luke says this, "All the Divine visits culminated when He came in the person of His Son to abide with men, to be their Redeemer, to establish a new righteousness, lift them into the freedom of a glad and willing obedience to the Divine will, and so to turn all their sorrows into joy." Or, as Philip Brooks put it in 1868, "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight." May you have a joyous Christmas and a blessed new year of pursuing a sweeter, more profound relationship with our loving Lord.

YOUTH CONFERENCE – PASTOR CHRIS KNIGHT & PASTOR JONATHAN EDWARDS

Time is moving fast, and we are making plans for YCON 2025. Our theme will be "VERTICAL FOCUS" from Colossians 3:2, "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." YCON is open to all students in grades 6-12. Students who attend must secure their own lodging with family, friends, or church chaperones. The cost for YCON is set at $100 which includes: breakfast, lunch, YCON T-shirt, and all activities. A picnic at Scioto Park on July 4 is being planned, as well as a canoe/kayak trip on the beautiful Scioto River. We are looking forward to a great time of fun, fellowship, worship, and Bible teaching. Make plans to join us Friday, July 4 - Tuesday, July 8, 2025.

If you're interested in helping as a counselor in 2025, please contact Pastor Chris Knight at chrisk4christ@gmail.com as soon as possible. Thank you!

CGBCI SCHOOLS OF THEOLOGY – DR RUSS SIMPSON

National Graduation for Practoriums is scheduled at National Conference the summer of 2025, at Marriott Columbus Northwest. This will be our eighth nationally recognized graduation. Potential graduates must have transcripts submitted to Dr. Simpson by January 30, 2025. This timing is necessary in case a small course must be picked up to qualify, and graduation caps and gowns must be ordered in February. We have a limited supply of loaner gowns on a first serve basis.

NEW TROY GBC – PASTOR ROBERT MENSINGER

Our attendances and offerings have been holding up well despite our small numbers. My wife Lila is now home after three weeks in two hospitals for problems with her kidneys, liver, bladder and heart. She is doing well but still on a catheter. We are scheduled to take her to a urologist on Dec. 31. We are praying for good news. This has been a tough ordeal on both of us.

Pastor Ron Welsh is continuing in his study in 1 Thessalonians for our adult Sunday school class. He is doing substitute teaching right now to supplement his income but is seeking something more substantial. I am now in chapter nine of Revelation and the series is going very well. Thanks for your prayers and support through all of this.

CGBCI BIBLE QUIZZING – PASTOR PHILIP MOELLER

The next quiz rally will be at Orrville on January 11 and will cover John 14-17.

PRAYER REQUEST – PASTOR RON WELSH

Would you pray with me in consideration of beginning a Jewish ministry in our Fellowship? We had one, in the California area, decades ago. I believe this is appropriate in light of world conditions and our commitment to reaching out to the Jewish people. Pray for God's will to be done. Salvation is of the Jew (John 4:22).

NATIONAL EVANGELISM TEAM – PASTOR DEL MILLER

NET 25 is coming! The application deadline for team members is February 1, 2025, which is in about seven weeks. Another year has flown by at high speed!

One of the new presentations we worked on for NET 24 was a choral reading of Psalm 27. We had never tried anything quite like that before and we all really enjoyed it a great deal. The likelihood is high that we will do something similar for NET 25! It was a blessing working on it as a team and it was good to observe the reactions of the people who saw us present it. Many of them obviously connected with it. It was coming along fairly well during training week and then we added some musical background with the keyboard. That really filled it out and made it all the more impactful. The last verse of the Psalm is always appropriate for any of us at any time:
"Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14).

COLLEGE OF PASTORS MIDYEAR MEETING – PASTOR CHRIS KNIGHT

COP members: mark your calendars for March 11-13, 2025. The meetings will be held at the Grace Brethren Chapel, Gibsonburg, OH. Information about hotels, staying with a host family, and dining options will be sent out in mid-January. A schedule will be sent at the same time. Watch for details in your email. If you have any questions or business items to add to the agenda, please contact me at chrisk4christ@gmail.com or 814-483-9384. Thank you!

Contributors: Pastor Robert Kulp, Pastor Isaac Graham, Pastor Joshua Steiner, Pastor Philip Moeller, Pastor Terry Reese, Pastor Matt Foreman, Pastor Davy Troxel, and Pastor DeLane Miller.
The first addition will be ready for the first quarter of 2025.
(January * February * March)

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